

Return to Use Initiative

2006 Demonstration Project

Tinkham Garage: Londonderry, New Hampshire

THE SITE: The 375-acre Tinkham Garage site is a former waste disposal site where liquids and sludge from septic tank truck washings were deposited on the ground surface directly behind the Garage. In 1978, nearby residents complained of foam and odors in a small, unnamed brook, resulting in an investigation by the Londonderry Health Department. In 1983, the drinking water supply well and nearby residential wells were taken out of service because of the contamination. Cleanup activities at the site began in 1987 and included excavation of contaminated soils with on-site treatment, removal of contaminated ground water, and implementation of institutional controls to restrict the present and future use of the aquifer. Remedy construction was completed in 1995. Ground water monitoring continues to ensure that any lingering contaminants do not pose a threat to human health and the environment. Recent ground water data indicate that cleanup of the ground water is progressing as anticipated.

THE OPPORTUNITY: Much of the site remained vacant and underutilized after the cleanup, aside from pre-existing residential properties on the site. The site is located in the town of Londonderry, on the border with the town of Derry. Community stakeholders were determined to make redevelopment of the Tinkham Garage site a reality.

THE BARRIER: Reuse discussions began during the early stages of the site's remediation, but potential site users had misconceptions and questions about reuse possibilities at the site. Stakeholders and potential site users needed clear information about the site in order to make informed decisions. As early as the remedial design stage, it had become apparent that the site would not be usable without water and sewer infrastructure. The lack of concrete information available about the site made it even more difficult for any project to move forward.

THE SOLUTION: Key stakeholders refused to allow the site to languish as a vacant, fenced property. EPA responded by providing easily understandable information about the site that would help the interested parties determine what they needed to do to safely reuse the site. Armed with this information, stakeholders demonstrated extraordinary dedication to the revitalization of Tinkham Garage and served as the primary catalyst for reuse. The two towns worked together



Barriers:

Lack of clear site information; absence of water and sewer access

Solution:

Reuse assessment and site information sheets; active dialogue between EPA and stakeholders; community participation and perseverance



Before:

Cleaned up waste disposal site with ongoing ground water monitoring that posed a difficult redevelopment challenge to two adjacent towns

After:

Commercial retail plaza and active senior housing development

to install a new water and sewer system, which EPA incorporated as an integral part of the site's cleanup; the ground water extracted from the site was transported from the site in Londonderry through the new system to Derry's treatment facility. Institutional controls were established to prohibit ground water use without interfering with reuse activities on the land surface. Stakeholders expressed interest in site-specific information and clarification of Superfund liability provisions, and EPA responded accordingly during the sale of portions of the property to The Home Depot in 2001 and Gilcreast Realty Holdings II, LLC in 2003. In response to general community interest and requests for current information about the site, EPA also issued a reuse assessment in September 2004. This document provided information about the history, cleanup activities, liability issues, and environmental status of the site. Recently, developers installed a precautionary vapor intrusion mitigation system in The Nevins housing development, with EPA on hand for support. Ultimately, it was the initiative and perseverance of key stakeholders, coupled with EPA's willingness to respond to their requests that made reuse of the Tinkham Garage site a success.

THE SITE NOW: The community of Londonderry now enjoys a Home Depot, a Staples, a 99 Restaurant, and a Dunkin' Donuts. New residents have been moving into a 125-unit active senior housing development called The Nevins (construction pictured below). Spanning 95 acres on the southern part of the site, The Nevins includes a condominium complex and single-family homes. The neighborhood is getting more and more established and construction is in its final phase. Approximately nine acres remain for commercial development immediately behind the Tinkham Realty Office and adjacent to the Home Depot. The town of Londonderry now has a higher tax revenue and greater economic activity as a result of reuse at the site, and Derry has improved traffic patterns due to transportation infrastructure improvements. Property values around the site in both towns have also risen, to the satisfaction of surrounding residents.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: John Podgurski, Region 1 Superfund Redevelopment Coordinator, at (617) 918-1296 or podgurski.john@epa.gov.

